

Unit 8: Fundamentalisms

Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will

Be aware of the following

- Variety within Islamic thought and practice
- Interchangeability of terms used to describe Muslim militant fundamentalist schools of thought
- Differences between Muslim revivalists and extremist fanatics
- Emotionally charged political nature of the term terrorist when paired with Islam.
- Private, personal dimensions of Islam as practiced by many adherents
- Reasons for the resurgence of Islamic Fundamentalism
- Contribution of militant Islam's successes in Iran and Afghanistan to fanatic extremists
- Afghanistan's Taliban movement
- Western values commonly rejected by Arab traditionalists
- Differing Middle East nation/state responses to the West

Identify

- Religious nationalism
- Muslim revivalists
- Taliban
- Islamic radical fanatics
- Militant Islamists

Realize

- Militant Islam is but a segment of the larger picture of world-wide Islam
- Many militant Islamists embrace aspects of secularist, modern thought
- Ever changing, fluid nature of many fanatical groups

Unit 8: Fundamentalisms

- Not all Arabs look favorably upon the West
- Militant extremism may serve as a rallying point for discontented minorities in Middle East

Unit 8: Fundamentalisms

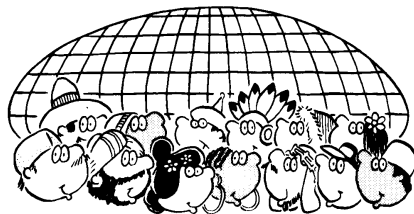
"Most Muslims are impressed by the irony of the West's current concern with Islamic fundamentalism given that, for the greater part of the Cold War, Islam was perceived as a faithful Western ally sharing an aversion to godless communism."

-- Mushahid Hussain, "Cold War Against Islam," Far Eastern Economic Review, 2 July 1992, p. 22.



"We need to be careful of that emotive label, fundamentalism, and distinguish, as Muslims do, between revivalists, who choose to take the practice of their religion most devoutly, and fanatics or extremists, who use this devotion for political ends." Prince of Wales, "Islam and the West," IQRA, p. 18.

I. Diversity Within Islam



There is no single Islamic voice. Muslims are as diverse as each of the countries in which they live. As with other major religions of the world, the degree and intensity of practice by Muslim adherents varies.

Unit 8: Fundamentalisms

For clarification, the following chart may assist in plotting various Islamic schools of thought.

nominalists	moderates	fundamentalists	extremists
		traditionalists	fanatics
		uncompromisers	radicals
		revivalists	Islamists
			militants
			renegades
			"politicized Islam"

Most of the American media attention given Islam focuses on the radical, extremist edge. Such characterizations do not treat the majority of Islamic adherents.

Because the media treats fundamentalist and extremist Islam so extensively, this section primarily seeks to understand these schools of thought.

The perspective of Lt. Gen. Anthony Zinni, deputy commander of U.S. Central Command, clarified the fundamentalist--extremist distinction in a recent Army Times interview.

"We're very careful to separate fundamentalism from extremism...Some people relate fundamentalism and extremism as being the same. We don't. There are fundamentalists that are not violent, that are not hostile, they just have a very conservative approach to their religion. (18 Nov 96, p. 10.)"

Scholar Seyyed Nasr offers a healthy perspective on the place of fundamentalist and extremist movements within Islam.



"Traditional Islam is like the mountain on whose slopes various geological processes, such as weathering and sedimentation created by streams, take place. It is these processes that can be compared to modernism, fundamentalism, and the like and that are usually studied by scholars accustomed to the study of change and oblivious to the vast, permanent mountain on whose slopes these changes are taking place."
 ("Islam" in Our Religions, p. 515)

There is variety within the fundamentalist and extremist traditions. Author Judith Miller, in her exhaustive study of Fundamentalisms within the Middle East, finds militant Islam to become "even more fragmented and diverse," distinct from country to country. (See God Has Ninety-Nine Names, p. 14)

II. Worldwide Religious Nationalism

Professor Mark Juergensmeyer, in his book The New Cold War, Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State, sees fundamentalist Islam (Muslim religious nationalism) within the context of a larger, world-wide resurgence of religious fundamentalism (termed "religious nationalism" by Dr. Juergensmeyer). The University of Minnesota's Caesar Farah agrees.

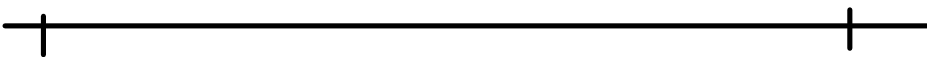
"Falling back on religion is not unique with Islamists today. [Consider] India's xenophobic Hindu movement, Orthodox Jews in Israel demanding a religious state, Buddhists in east Asia seeking the same end. Catholics in eastern Europe, Latin America and the Philippines, 'all have turned to their faith to define their goals and to mobilize.'" ("Political Dimensions of Islamic Fundamentalism," Digest of Middle East Studies, Spring 1996, p. 10.)



III. Understanding Islamic Fundamentalism

Britain's Lieutenant Commander David Kibble categorizes various Muslim types by the following three axes.

1. The Religious Axis

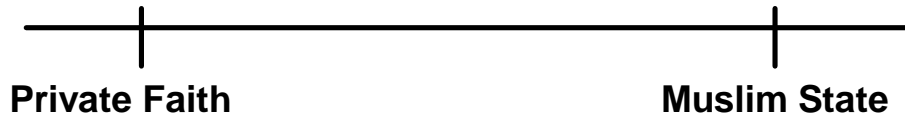
	
Modernist	Revivalist
<p>"Modernist Muslims interpret their faith in terms of modern knowledge. They tend to accept Western scientific ideas--such as evolution--as well as the political ideal of democracy and women's emancipation. They interpret the Qur'an and Muslim tradition to accommodate their ideas." ("Understanding Fundamentalism," <u>Military Review</u>, Sep 95, p. 41.)</p>	

"[R]evivalists reject Western ideas and call for restoring traditional Islamic ideas. They believe in literal creation, accept the Qur'an as [God's] actual writings which should be followed as such, and press for an Islamic state based upon Sharia...Revivalists are sometimes called fundamentalists because they wish to return to their faith's original tenets... Fundamentalism, in its militant Islamic sense, is just one variant of revivalism. Revivalism may also be a

Fundamentalisms

quietest type, which retains traditional religious belief but espouses a less politically active stance."
(p. 41.)

2. The Evangelical Axis



"At one end is the Muslim who believes his faith is a purely private affair, while at the other is the Muslim who believes [God] wants the whole world to become a Muslim state or series of states."
(p. 41.)

3. The Political Axis



"At the one end is the nonactivist or quietist...We are for peaceful change in society. Mainly, our aim is to educate people, to train people how to live their lives well in relation to religion...."

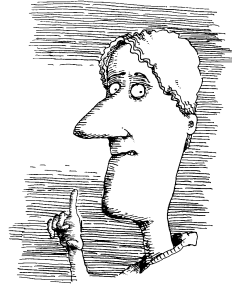


[A]t the other is the Muslim who embraces terrorism as a legitimate political action. 'The Qur'an commands: 'Wage war until all disobedience (of divine law) is wiped out!'...Once we have won the war...we shall turn to other wars.'" (p. 41.)

Judith Miller, in describing the spectrum found within the political axis, finds many Muslim traditionalists as "shunning politics in principle." (See God Has Ninety-Nine Names, p. 17)

4. Fluid Nature

Categories describing various schools of thought within Islam blur and shift.



Writes Judith Miller, "...many an Islamic movement is simultaneously a political group, a militia, and an amalgam of terror cells. Yesterday's terrorist can be today's peacemaker, and vice versa...But such flexibility suggests that militant groups should be evaluated not only by their words but also by their deeds, and over time." (God Has Ninety-Nine Names, p. 17.)

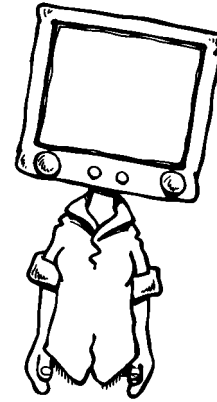
IV. The Fundamentalist Resurgence

Reasons for the revival of Islamic fundamentalism vary from author to author. The following responses draw heavily from Lt. Col. David Kibble's "Understanding Islamic Fundamentalism" and Judith Miller's God Has Ninety-Nine Names.

1. Disenchantment Rapid urbanization and industrialization in the Middle East cause many traditional peoples to feel displaced, uncomfortable, and ill at ease within the new surroundings. "Muslims moving to urban areas found themselves confronted with 20th-century Western ideas and commercialism, which led to a sense of not belonging. This led them to turn to Islam's familiar roots." (Kibble, p. 42.)

The Prince of Wales emphasizes this sense of disillusionment with the West. "Among the many religious, social and political causes of what we might more accurately call the Islamic revival is a powerful feeling of disenchantment, of the realization that..."

Western technology and material things are insufficient, and that a deeper meaning to life lies elsewhere in the essence of Islamic belief." (Prince Charles, "Islam and the West".)



2. Demographic Implications of population explosion and resulting poverty. The demographic explosion, with resultant problems associated with overpopulation, contributes to the sense of estrangement. The straining of national resources and accompanying destitution experienced by the masses drives some to seek solace in traditional Islamic belief.

3. Populist Appeal The Islamic revolution in Iran, coupled with successes by Mujahedin in Afghanistan, empower many to seek a renewed identity within their traditional faith.

4. Response to Perceived Western Manipulation

"The West appears to selectively support Middle Eastern nations out of self-interest, particularly in terms of oil and defense contracts, while condemning other countries for poor human rights records..."



Western policy is often not about human rights issues at all, but about economic self-interests." (Kibble, p. 44.)

Pakistani journalist Mushahid Hussain elaborates. *"...the West applies different standards to Muslim and non-Muslim countries in the areas of religion, democracy, military power, terrorism and human rights. So-called Islamic fundamentalism has replaced communism as the West's bugbear."* ("Cold War against Islam", Far Eastern Economic Review, 2 Jul 1992, p. 22)

5. Reaction to Oil Dollars Related to the perception of Western manipulation is the theory expounded by Egyptian intellectual Muhammad Sid Ahmed. As referred to in God Has Ninety-Nine Names, oil dollars *"'corrupted politically and intellectually an entire generation and produced, in reaction, a cynical, puritanical Islamic generation.'"* (p. 468)

6. Political Expediency This is practiced by some rulers who legitimize themselves through Islam. General Khalid Bin Sultan, in his description of Saddam Hussein, identifies this leader as someone who uses religion out of self-interest. (See Desert Warrior, p. 230)

7. Political Opposition These are factions who use Islam to unite against the majority.



Fundamentalist Islam can provide a rallying point--a voice for the disinherited--for opposition parties in some Middle Eastern countries.

Fundamentalisms

In addition to reasons listed above, Judith Miller, (p. 468), in describing the many factors contributing to the Islamic revival, identifies the following as also aiding militant Islam's rise.



- Collapse of Arab nationalism after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.
- Fall of the Soviet Union/Marxist dream of the late 1980s.
- Failure of most Middle Eastern governments to deliver on ambitious promises made after independence.
- Cold war Western support to Muslim groups as insurance against Communist encroachment.

V. Selected Islamic Views on Fundamentalism

Offering a different perspective from the above, Pakistan-based columnist Mushahid Hussain sees the recent Islamic reassertion as "quite normal and should not be a cause for concern in the West." ('Cold War Against the Islam,' Far Eastern Economic Review, 2 Jul 1992, p. 22, NS 3300, p. 70.) According to Mushahid, Iran and Afghanistan bolstered Islamic self-confidence and debunked the myth of superpower invincibility.

Mushahid Hussain sees three areas where the resurgence of Islam can be seen in a positive light.

1. Politics Islam helps reassert and represent forces opposing the West or corrupt, "puppet" monarchies.

2. Culture The mosque becomes a symbol for reassertion of uniting, traditional values.

3. Foreign Affairs Fundamentalist Islam can serve as a voice for unification in the arena of international affairs.

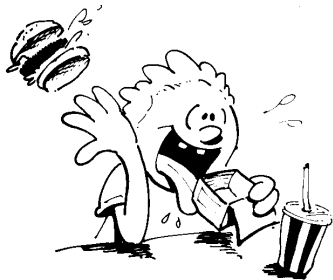
4. Extremism

What receives even less attention in our Western press is the condemnation--by Islamic leaders themselves--of Muslim extremist practices.



Afghanistan's Taliban (tahl-ee-BAHN) interpretation and implementation of Islamic law draws harsh criticism.

VI. Islam and the West



Many areas of the Middle East do not prize our affluent culture. "[P]eople in the Islamic world genuinely fear...Western materialism and mass culture as a deadly challenge to their Islamic culture and way of life...

The fact is that our form of materialism can be offensive to devout Muslims--and I do not just mean the extremists among them." (Prince of Wales, "Islam and the West," p. 19.)

Some Islamists do not reject Western technology, industrial strength and advancement in art and science. Rather, it is when Western consumer values run counter to the purer teachings of Muslim faith that conflict arises.

Fundamentalisms

"Values rejected include excessive consumerism; stress on material gain over moral enrichment; permissive and immoral manifestations, as in pornography, sexual irregularities, abuse of children, lurid enticements of the excessive display of the flesh masquerading as chic or vogue." (Farah, p. 2)



Dr. Robert Crane accentuates this distinction, applying it to American political ideals.

"[It] is not the real America that is despised in the Arab or Muslim World. America's republican institutions and traditional values, political freedom and material prosperity, equality of rights and technical proficiency, are all admired.



What is hated is the ugly face that modernism and post-modernism present: the pornography, crime, narcotics, public indecency, polluted culture, ...insulting attitude toward religion." (NS 3300, p. 71.)

Vocabulary List: Fundamentalisms

Consumer values Negative Western values often imported to the Middle East by new communications technology. Moral permissiveness, crime, narcotics, indecency, polluted culture and secularized attitudes towards religion are often seen as manifestations of consumer values.

Disinherited The poor, dispossessed, unemployed of a society. Often young, this sub-class seems to have little future. In some Middle East countries, the disinherited are educated but have no jobs available.

Extremists Fanatics who use their religion for political ends, often advocating terrorism and violence in the process

Fundamentalism Emotive label, often categorizing those who would return to the basic, traditional, fundamental elements of their belief or practice. Some fundamentalists can be nonviolent, conservative individuals who seek peaceful change. Others are extremists who advocate violent change.

Militant fundamentalists Those who see their religion as bringing about revolutionary change in their societies--often through violent means. Also called fanatical extremists, radicals, or renegades.

Modernist Muslims Those who interpret their faith in terms of modern knowledge. These adherents often accept many Western scientific ideas.

Modernization Using the scientific and technological methods of the contemporary world to bring about change in society. Within Muslim circles, many accept modernization but reject the Western values which often accompany such change.

Monotheism Belief in one god

Political expediency Those who use any means available to accomplish their political ends. Some Middle East leaders use Islam in a pragmatic sense--only to bring about their intended political objectives.

Politicized Islam Another term for fanatical extremist practice. Adherents use their religious belief to bring about political ends--often with violent means.

Quietist Individuals and groups who advocate peaceful, non-violent, quiet change in their society.

Religious nationalism A less emotionally charged term for fundamentalist movements who use religion as their base. The term describes those who apply their religion to promote national/political ends.

Revivalist Muslims Individuals who reject Western ideas and call for a return to traditional Islamic ideas.

Revivalists Those take their religion seriously, advocating a devout return to the piety and practice of their beliefs.

Tawhid (tou HEED) Proclamation of the oneness of God. Tawhid implies as well the inseparability of church and state (religion and politics).

Westernization European and American values which often accompany modernization practices. Often the term is seen in a negative light by many Middle East Muslims.

Review Quiz: Fundamentalisms



Part 1--Multiple Choice

Place the most correct response in the blank provided.

1. _____ The term "militant fundamentalist" most readily equates with

- A. moderates.
- B. revivalists.
- C. fanatical extremists.

2. _____ What is NOT a reason for the Islamic resurgence?

- A. Reactions to oil dollars
- B. Appeal of Iran and Afghanistan revolutions
- C. Middle East stability and economic/political constancy

3. _____ The Taliban is a student movement which now controls 70 percent of which nation?

- A. Algeria
- B. Turkey
- C. Afghanistan

4. _____ Western values commonly rejected by Middle East religious nationalists include

- A. Science, learning, and political equality
- B. Permissiveness, moral laxity, consumerism
- C. Technology and communications development

5. _____ The _____ political response seeks to separate Islam from politics at the nation/state level.

- A. modernist
- B. secularist
- C. fundamentalist

6. _____ What result comes from equating all Islamic fundamentalist movements with extremism?
- A. A clear picture of the Middle East arises.
 - B. A distorted picture arises. Many fundamentalists are not violent, hostile, and prone to terrorism.
 - C. Understanding of the nuances of Muslim thought and practice are promoted.
7. _____ What is NOT a reason for the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism?
- A. Disenchantment with industrialization
 - B. Response to perceived Western manipulation of the Middle East
 - C. Sympathetic Western media portrayals of Muslim groups
-



Part 2--True/False Place a T or F in the blank provided.

1. _____ According to author Judith Miller, militant Islam takes many forms. It is fragmented and diverse.
2. _____ The Islamic revival is another expression of the worldwide resurgence of religion.
3. _____ All Muslim traditionalists are deeply involved in the political processes of their respective countries.
4. _____ Most Muslims worldwide support the Shariah employed by Afghanistan's Taliban.
5. _____ Militant Islam is but a segment of the larger worldwide Muslim community.
6. _____ Many militant Islamists embrace aspects of secularist, modern thought.
7. _____ Many fanatical groups are fluid, everchanging in their views and compositions.

8. _____ There is great variety within Islamic thought and practice.

9. _____ Some Middle East leaders support Islamic renewal for politically expedient reasons.



Part 3--Matching

Place the letter of the most correct answer in the blank provided.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ Modernist Muslims | A. Negative Western values often imported to the Middle East by new communications technology. Moral permissiveness, crime, narcotics, indecency, polluted culture, and secularized attitudes towards religion are often seen as manifestations. |
| 2. _____ Disinherited | |
| 3. _____ Revivalist Muslims | |
| 4. _____ Political expediency | |
| 5. _____ Westernization | |
| 6. _____ Consumer values | B. The poor, dispossessed, unemployed of a society. Often young, this subclass seems to have little future. |
| 7. _____ Quietist | |
| 8. _____ Religious nationalism | C. Fanatics who use their religion for political ends, often advocating terrorism and violence in the process. |
| 9. _____ Militant fundamentalists | |
| 10. _____ Tawhid | D. Emotive label, often categorizing those who would return to the basic, traditional, fundamental elements of their belief or practice. |
| 11. _____ Politicized Islam | |
| 12. _____ Extremists | |
| 13. _____ Modernization | |
| 14. _____ Monotheism | E. Those who see their religion as bringing about revolutionary change in their societies--often through violent means. Also |
| 15. _____ Fundamentalism | |

16. _____ Revivalists

called fanatical extremists,
radicals, or renegades.

F. Those who interpret their faith
in terms of modern knowledge.
These adherents often accept
many Western scientific ideas.

G. Using the scientific and
technological methods of the
contemporary world to bring
about change in society.

H. Belief in one God.

I. Those who use any means
available to accomplish their
political ends.

J. Another term for fanatical
extremist practice. Adherents
use their religious belief to
bring about political ends--
often with violent means.

K. Individuals and groups who
advocate peaceful, non-violent,
'quiet' change in their society.

L. A less emotionally charged term
for fundamentalist movements who
use religion as their base. The
term describes those who apply
their religion to promote
national/political ends.

M. Individuals who reject Western
ideas and call for a return to
traditional Islamic ideas.

N. Those who take their religion
seriously, advocating a devout
return to the piety and practice
of their beliefs.

- O. Proclamation of the oneness of God. Implies as well the inseparability of church and state (religion and politics).
- P. European and American values which often accompany modernization practices. Often the term is seen in a negative light by many Middle East Muslims.



"Take a break."

Sources Used in Fundamentalisms.

Dickey, Christopher, "Should We Fear Islam?" Newsweek, (15 Feb 1993), p. 30.

Farah, Caesar, "Political Dimensions of Islamic Fundamentalism," Digest of Middle East Studies, (Spring 1996), pp. 1-14.

Gawrych, George W., "Jihad in the 20th Century," Military Review, (Sep-Oct 1995), pp. 33-39.

Hussain, Mushahid, "Cold War Against Islam," Far Eastern Economic Review, (2 Jul 1994), p. 22.

Khaled Bin Sultan, Desert Warrior, (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

Kibble, David G., "Understanding Islamic Fundamentalism," Military Review, (Sep-Oct 1995), pp. 40-45.

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, "Islam," Our Religions, ed., Arvind Sharma, (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

Said, Kamil, "Supplementary Material to NS 3300," Naval Postgraduate School, Jul 1984.

Sciolino, Elaine, "The Many Faces of Islamic Law," New York Times, (13 Oct 1996), p. E40.

Zinni, Anthony, "Zinni: Watch Iran Closely," Army Times, (18 Nov 1996), p. 10.



Resources for Further Study

Bendroth, Margaret Lamberts, "Fundamentalists and Us," (review of Fundamentalisms Comprehended edited by Martin E Marty and R. Scott Appleby, University of Chicago Press), Christian Century, 22-29 May 1996, p. 575. The author reviews the fifth and last volume of the 'Fundamentalisms Project,' a "worldwide tour of militant, antimodern religious movements." The study provides a broader religiopolitical context in which to see Islamic fundamentalisms.

Bergman, Susan, "Faith Unto Death," Christianity Today, 12 Aug 96, p. 18.

Burns, John, "Kabul's Victors Impose Harsh Islamic Mores," New York Times, (30 Sep 1996), p. 1.

Burns, John, "New Afghan Rulers Shock Even Their Backers in Pakistan," New York Times, (30 Sep 1996), p. 3.

Colson, Charles, "Tortured for Christ--and Ignored," Christianity Today, 4 Mar 1996, p. 80.

Franz, Douglas and Collins, Catherine, "The Accountant is a Terrorist," (New York Times Magazine, 10 Nov 1996, pp. 45-50). Article describes the premature detonation of explosive devices by a Hezbollah terrorist.

Hughes, Patrick M., Global Threats to the United States and its Interests Abroad, (Statement for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 22 Feb 1996, Defense Intelligence Agency, [<http://www.dia.mil/apr96/001-04-96.html>]).

Juergensmeyer, Mark, The New Cold War: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State, (Berkeley, Calif: Univ. of Calif Press, 1993).

Kifner, John, "Alms and Arms: Tactics in a Holy War," (New York Times, 15 Mar 1996, p. A1).

Lawton, Kim, "Another Pastor Martyred in Iran," Christianity Today, 11 Nov 96, p. 99.

Lawton, Kim, "The Persecuted Church Stands Faithful," Christianity Today, 15 Jul 96, p. 54.

Lewis, Bernard, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," The Atlantic Monthly, (Sep 1990), pp. 47-60.

MacFarquhar, Neil, "Portrait of a Suicide Bomber: Devout, Apolitical and Angry," (New York Times, 18 Mar 1996, p. A1).

Mitchell, Alison, "Chemical Engineer is Held in the Trade Center Blast," (New York Times, 11 Mar 1993, p. A1).

Moyers, Bill, The Arab World: Conversations on Arab History, Religion and Culture, Public Broadcasting Five Part Video Series, especially program Three "The Image of God" and Five "Arabs and the West." (Mystic Fire Video, Inc., Cooper Station, New York: 1990).

Moyers, Bill, The Arab World, Conversations on Arab History, Religion and Culture (Mystic Fire Video), Part Three, "The Image of God."

Pelletreau, Robert H., "Dealing with the Muslim Politics of the Middle East: Algeria, Hamas, Iran," (U.S. Department of State Address by assistant Secretary of State before council on Foreign Relations, 8 May 1996, [gopher://gopher.state.gov:...<]).

Schemann, Serge, "Palestinian Believed to Be Bombing Mastermind is Killed," (New York Times, 6 Jan 1996, p. A3). Account of death of Hamas "most wanted man by Israel," Yahya Ayyash.

Schmemmann, Serge, "Terror Isn't Alone as a Threat to Mideast Peace," New York Times, (3 Mar 1996), p. 4-1.

Sciolino, Elaine, "Seeing Green: The Red Menace is Gone. But Here's Islam," New York Times, (21 Jan 1996), p. 4-1.

Unit 8: Fundamentalisms

U.S. Department of State, 1995 Patterns of Global Terrorism,
(Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Apr 1996,
[>gopher://gopher.state.gov:...,]).

Wren, Christopher, "U.S. Jury convicts 3 in a Conspiracy to Bomb
Airliners," (New York Times, 5 Sep 1996, p. A1).



"Be diligent."

